Commemoration of the European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti on 2 August 2024

Friday 2 August, 2024

O?wi?cim, Poland -

On 2 August, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Association of Roma in Poland commemorate the 80th anniversary of the execution of the last remaining Roma and Sinti in Auschwitz. On the night of 2 to 3 August 1944, 4300 women, children and elderly people of the minority were forced into the gas chambers in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. In 2015, the European Parliament declared 2 August as European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti to commemorate the 500,000 victims of Nazi regime.

Alma Klasing, a Holocaust survivor who lost close relatives in Auschwitz, emphasised in her speech in Auschwitz: “The electoral success of the right-wing parties frightens me greatly. That is why I would like to warn young people against these false prophets and ask you with all my heart: defend our democracy.”

The Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, **Romani Rose**, referred to the legacy of all those murdered at Auschwitz, whose ashes cover its grounds. He emphasised: “The experience of Nazi dictatorship obliges us to defend human dignity and human rights everywhere and for everyone. Democracies must once again place universal human rights at the centre of their actions.”

The President of the Polish Senate, **Ma?gorzata Maria Kidawa-B?o?ska**, attending as the highest-ranking Polish government representative to date, stated: “After what happened at Auschwitz, we believed in Europe that the slogan "Never Again!" would become a guideline for all countries and politicians for good. Today, after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we experience that nothing is given once and for all. Neither peace, nor democracy, nor trust, nor even memory. This is the bitter knowledge, but it is also knowledge that impels action.”

“Auschwitz is synonymous with the greatest crime ever committed by humans against humans. It is synonymous with the break with civilisation unleashed by Germany. With the will to annihilate European Jewry. With the genocide of the Sinti and Roma. Here in Auschwitz, the racial fanaticism of the Nazis culminated in the savage wiping out of human lives”, said Bundestag President **Bärbel Bas** in her speech. She is the first senior representative of the Bundestag to have travelled to Auschwitz to commemorate the worst of Germany's crimes against humanity and remember the people who were murdered there by the National Socialists.

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